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# States Rights Party's Fields says he's locked out of headquarters

By Greg Vlicher
Staff Writer

Edward Fields, who is executive secretary of the National States Rights Party and was editor of the party newspaper for 25 years, said Tuesday he has been locked out of the party headquarters building in Marietta.

"I've been locked out of the building, locked out of my office," he said.

With former party chairman J.B. Stoner in prison for a 1958 church bombing in Birmingham, the National States Rights Party apparently has split into factions fighting for control of the organization and the party newspaper, the Thunderbolt. A pair of lawsuits were filed Friday over the split.

Fields blamed Dorothy Bickley, secretary to new national chairman W. Eugene Wilson, for his exclusion. He said no other members of the party's national executive committee live in the Atlanta area.

"They've all gone home, and she's running things," he said. "She's just like your secretary locking you out of your office."

Asked whether Ms. Bickley was acting on her own or for Wilson, Fields said, "I would like to know the answer to those questions. They are not talking to me."

He declined to say how the rift within the party developed.

Fields, a former chiropractor, said he was editor of the Thunderbolt from 1958 until he resigned Oct. 6 and was replaced by Roger Sanford of Jacksonville, Fla. Fields said he retained the titles of corporate president and chairman of the board of the newspaper.

Fields said Ms. Bickley, originally from Rochester, N.Y., has been living in the Marietta area and working at party headquarters since January.

FIELDS: Leadership split.

Decatur attorney Larry Chrietzberg, representing Fields and other members of the board of directors of the newspaper, charged that Ms. Bickley is illegally trying to gain control of the Thunderbolt.

Chrietzberg said Ms. Bickley "has apparently talked to some of the (newspaper's) board members and convinced them that she ought to be running things.

"I think since Stoner's gone, he's off in prison and can't control things, so here comes this woman who sees something she thinks is easy pickings, something she can do behind his back," the attorney said.

Reached at party headquarters in Marietta Monday, Ms. Bickley said, "I have no comment."

A suit filed Friday in Cobb County Superior Court by Chrietzberg on behalf of Fields seeks $310,000 from Ms. Bickley and members of the party's national executive committee.

The suit claims that at an Oct. 6 meeting of the newspaper's board of directors, the defendants, acting with no legal authority, removed one board member, named two others and fired an employee of the newspaper, Delores Fields.

Named as defendants in the suit are Ms. Bickley, the national executive committee, and party board members Dallas Hale of Gainesville, Fla., Ray Stephens of Fort Walton Beach, Fla., W. Eugene Wilson of Jacksonville, Fla., and Jerry Pope and Paul Niswonger, both of Covington, Ky. Hale and Wiswonger are the two new board members who were named at the Oct. 6 meeting, according to the suit.

The suit seeks to keep the executive committee from continuing to publish the Thunderbolt, firing any of the paper's employees or taking any money from the newspaper's bank accounts.

A hearing date of Jan. 4 has been set for the suit.

In a companion suit, Christian Rights Inc. and Fields make similar claims against the same defendants and against Amy Wilmot of Jacksonville, Fla., and the Rev. R.B. Montgomery of Forest Park, a former national chairman.

Christian Rights Inc. is the nonprofit group that owns the land, building and offices of the party, including the newspaper's offices.

The suit alleges that the defendants have "entered into a conspiracy to usurp control" over Christian Rights "as a means of furthering a design to obtain control over another non-profit corporation, the Thunderbolt Inc."

A hearing date of Dec. 29 has been set for the companion suit.